

How To Become Friends with God

John 15:13, Exodus 33:11, James 2:23

INTRODUCTION:

This morning, I want to discuss the idea of becoming a friend of God. For many, this is a bizarre idea. We have often become so “religious” that we fail to think and understand that God desires to be intimate with us. On the flip side, we become so “used to God” or the way we have understood the Lord through our tradition that intimacy with God gets confusing because nothing is sacred anymore. We must hold transcendence and sovereignty in appropriate tension with accessibility, immanence, and intimacy. This can be a tough task because we, as humans, normally work on the polar ends of truth. This is why some churches today are the way they are: 1) So holy in ambiance that we feel far from God or 2) So laid back that we fail to recognize whose presence we have entered. Remember, Moses had to take off his shoes because of sacred holiness, but God desired to speak with Him.

I want to consider four Scripture passages and draw insight from them regarding becoming a friend of God.

John 15:12-15

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you.

Exodus 33:11

Thus, the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend.

James 2:23

Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God.

Isaiah 41:8

But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the offspring of Abraham, my friend;

I. Recognize You Were Once an Enemy

Romans 5:10-11

For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life. ¹¹ More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

Romans 8:7-8

For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. ⁸ Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

- A. In our natural state as sinners, we who bear His image are found to be rebels and enemies of God.
- B. Through our sinfulness, we have taken up arms in rebellion to God and found ourselves in opposition to Him.
- C. Many make claims about God as if they are on His side, while all the while, fail to recognize they are still found to be His enemy.
- D. Because we are an enemy of God in our sinful state, we must be reconciled to God and then seek to help others be reconciled to God. In doing this, we surrender to God and then join Him in His will to restore humanity and creation to what it used to be.

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

II. Engage with God Regularly

James 4:6-8

God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you.

- A. To be a friend to God, we must recognize as previously stated that we are enemies in need of reconciliation.
- B. Once that has occurred by confessing our sins to God placing Christ as Lord of our lives and placing faith in His substitutional work, the Bible declares that we are His children.
- C. God is the type of parent who befriends His children without forgetting He is the parent.
- D. God wants us to engage Him as James speaks of in these verses.
- E. We must come to Him humbly and with gratitude, submission, resisting evil, and seeking God.
- F. We must learn to engage God when we feel close and when we don't. When we are living in grace or having a shame spiral. In all things, engage the Lord!

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

III. Honor His Son as Holy

1 Peter 3:15

¹⁵ But in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect...

- A. Christ is the central theme, person, icon, etc. of Christianity.

- B. We live in a day and time where Christianity is big business and can easily be seen as corporate-centered rather than Christ-centered.
- C. Many fail to live as friends with God because we want what God has, but disrespect his child and the sacrifice He made.
- D. As followers of Christ, His life should be the bookend of our lives and agendas.
- E. We must honor the Son or else we don't have the Spirit or the Father.

1 John 2:18-25

¹⁸ Children, it is the last hour, and as you have heard that antichrist is coming, so now many antichrists have come. Therefore, we know that it is the last hour.

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us. But they went out, that it might become plain that they all are not of us. ²⁰ But you have been anointed by the Holy One, and you all have knowledge. ²¹ I write to you, not because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and because no lie is of the truth. ²² Who is the liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ? This is the antichrist, he who denies the Father and the Son. ²³ *No one who denies the Son has the Father. Whoever confesses the Son has the Father also.* ²⁴ Let what you heard from the beginning abide in you. If what you heard from the beginning abides in you, then you too will abide in the Son and in the Father. ²⁵ And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life.

IV. Obedience is Key!

James 2:23

Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"—and he was called a friend of God.

- A. Any relationship without it being founded on trust is not authentic and is not a relationship but simply an acquaintance.
- B. I have many acquaintances, but not many relationships because I have been around people and find it hard to trust most.
- C. You and I, being obedient to God, is key to being God's friend. This is not because our obedience impacts God, but rather our obedience to Him impacts us.

- D. We are friends with God through our obedience because our choice to obey reveals that we want the world to be the way He intended it to be, not the way our “enemy state” wanted it to be.
- E. It’s hard to be friends with a person who wants to burn your house down or hurt your family. In the same way, when we live a lifestyle of sin, we cannot be friends with God because our actions at that point are what nailed Christ to the Cross.
- F. On the other hand, if our house was wrecked, and someone showed up to help put it back together the way we gave direction, it would be displaying friendship. One, because they sought to please us by putting it back the way we wanted it to be, and two, they sought to help.
- G. God doesn’t need our help, but he seeks to change the world back to what it once was through the community of image-bearers who He has put in charge.
- H. This is why Christ became human to be the cornerstone of the New World being put together.

John 15:14

You are my friends if you do what I command you.

CONCLUSION

Although the North American Indians had no written alphabet before they met the white man, their language was anything but primitive. The vocabulary of many Indian nations was as large as that of their French and English exploiters, and often far more eloquent. Compare the coldness of “friend” with “one-who-carries-my-sorrows-on-his-back.”- *United Church Observer*

We can now become friends with God because He chose to become our friend and to love His enemies the way He taught us to love, the “One who carries my sorrows on his back”